12-31-80 FWST

FBI agents silent on any vendetta with Dallas police

DALLAS (AP) — Dallas FBI agents declined to comment Tuesday on a report that former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover conducted a 2½-year vendetta against the Dallas Police Department because of personal anger directed at Jesse Curry, then chief of police.

The Dallas Morning News, citing documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, reported Tuesday that Hoover was angry at remarks made concerning the FBI's role in the Kennedy assassination investigation and ordered local agents to cease all cooperation with the police force here from early 1964 until Curry resigned in 1966.

Dallas FBI agent U.H. Specht said Tuesday that his office had no comment on the newspaper story.

"You're dealing with a research story, with historical things that happened 15 years ago before I even joined the bureau," he said. "You're dealing with an area of archaeology. It . . . certainly does not reflect any attitudes or feelings the current (FBI) administration has toward the Dallas Police Department."

The FBI in Washington declined comment.

The newspaper said Hoover, in early 1964, ordered his agents to stop teaching at the Dallas Police Academy and refused to train Dallas officers at the FBI National Academy in Washington until Curry's 1966 resignation.

The rift came when Curry said the FBI tried to hide the fact that it knew Lee Harvey Oswald was in Dallas but had not notified police, *The News* said. Curry later retracted the remark.

The Warren Commission in 1964 identified Oswald as Kennedy's assassin.

Despite a written apology from Curry, Hoover wrote Dallas agent-in-charge J. Gordon Shanklin in April 1964 that he and "personnel of your office are to deal at arm's length with Dallas Police Department personnel. We will not extend training assistance, nor will we accept candidates from that department to the National Academy," according to documents quoted by *The News*.

Almost two years later, in 1966, Hoover wrote that Dallas Mayor Erik Jonsson had "asked to discuss the serious breach between this bureau and the Dallas Police Department, if one exists."

"I informed Mayor Jonsson that a breach in relations with Chief of Police Curry and his department does exist," Hoover wrote. "I made it perfectly clear actions and statements by Chief Curry and some of his personnel with respect to the bureau clearly indicated they are incompetent, blabbermouths and, in some instances, liars."

Hoover said Jonsson promised to "lay down certain guidelines under which Curry will be expected to operate," including "orders that Curry shall be certain of his facts in any statements made, establish tight discipline in his department and be circumspect in his remarks to the press," the newspaper said.

Jonsson said recently he recalls meeting with Hoover, but he did not remember "any comment about Curry or the Dallas Police Department."

After Charles Batchelor was announced as Curry's successor, Hoover wrote Shanklin that if Batchelor "runs the Dallas Police Department with a firm hand, you may resume normal cooperative relations with that department."

Batchelor died in 1969, Curry died last June.